

Harford County Commission on Disabilities

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Meeting Minutes April 25, 2011

Attendance:

Members Present:	Members Absent:	Associate Members Present:
Amy Axel	Helene Dubay	
Susan Austin	Councilman Guthrie	
Niki Biggs	Steve Sopel	
Bob Coen	Marc Weinstein	
Reverend Ellison	Andrea Wiley	
Keith England		
Kathy Halliday		
Laurie Kwiedorowicz		
Mike Mathias		
Ben Mayforth		
Tracy Moore		

- I. Vice Chair Reverend Alvin Ellison called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.
- II. Introductions: Members of the Commission and visitors introduced themselves.
- III. Minutes: The minutes of the March 28, 2011 meeting were approved as presented.
- IV. Committee Reports:
 - A. Membership:
 1. The reappointment of the following Commissioners was approved by the County Executive and the County Council:
 - Marc J. Weinstein in the category of "Family Member of an Individual with a Disability".
 - Laurie A. Kwiedorowicz and Andrea L. Wiley, in the category of "County Citizens with an interest in assisting individuals with disabilities."

- Kathleen M. Halliday and Susan F. Austin, in the category of “Individuals Representing Agencies Serving People with Disabilities”.
 - 2. The reappointment of Marc J. Weinstein and Reverend Alvin Q. Ellison as Chair and Vice Chair has not yet been approved. Sharon will follow-up.
 - 3. Amy Axel asked for a copy of her most recent reappointment letter. Sharon will forward it to her.
- B. Accessibility Committee:
- 1. Housing: Fair Housing training was held on April 16, 2011 at the Bel Air Branch of the Harford County Public Library. A copy of Aegis coverage of the event and a proclamation on Fair Housing month signed by the County Executive were circulated. As a result of discussion at the event, training on Reasonable Accommodation and Reasonable Modification is being planned.
 - 2. Accessible County Facilities: Bob Coen circulated a photo of the new accessible ramp at the Susquehanna State Park. An interactive map of boating ramps in Harford County is at <http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/harford.asp>. Also, the Harford County Department of Parks and Recreation has information on accessibility at its parks and trails at http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/parks_rec/parks.cfm.
 - 3. Request for Waiver of the MD Accessibility Code: No new requests for waiver have been received.
 - 4. Ramps Program: Apparently three new ramps are being constructed. Sharon will forward additional information as it is available.
 - 5. Operation Access: Reverend Ellison reported that he will contact Sheriff Bane about repeating the “Accessible Parking Campaign” sometime this year.
- C. Education Committee: Sharon reported that the Expo for Transitioning Youth will be held on Saturday, March 17, 2012, from 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., at the New Life Center of the Mountain Christian Church in Joppa. The next Expo Planning Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 27, 2011 at 1:00 p.m. at the historic “Bel Air Colored High School”, 205 Hays Street, Bel Air.
- D. Government and Community Relations Committee:

1. Web page: The IMAGE Center is the “spotlighted” agency on the Commission’s web page.
 2. Legislative Committee: Chairperson Laurie Kwiedorowicz distributed a review of disability-related legislation passed by the Maryland General Assembly during the 2011 Session. Laurie also distributed a summary of expert comments on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act.
 3. Voice of the Disability Community:
 - Maryland Alliance of Local Commissions and Committees on Disabilities: no new information.
 - Maryland Youth Leadership Forum: cancelled for summer 2011.
 - Jurisdictional Planning Group: the successful Emergency Preparedness Month displays at the branches of the Harford County Public Library will be repeated in September 2011.
- E. Employment Committee: Niki Biggs reported that:
1. The annual Employment Awards Luncheon will be held on Thursday, October 20, 2011, at noon at the Maryland Golf and Country Clubs.
 2. The Committee will also sponsor a free training on Thursday, May 26, 2011, from 9:00 a.m. until noon, at the Aberdeen Workforce Center, 34 North Philadelphia Blvd., 3rd Floor, Aberdeen. The training is designed for job developers and other staff of service provider agencies who work with jobseekers with disabilities. The training will focus on the new Maryland Workforce Exchange, an online jobseeker/workforce services system specifically developed for jobseekers, students, case managers, employers, training providers, workforce professionals, and others seeking benefits and services.
 3. The next meeting of the committee will be held on Thursday, June 16, 2011, at 1:30 p.m. at the Aberdeen Workforce Center, 34 N. Philadelphia Blvd, 3rd floor, Aberdeen.
- F. Transportation Committee:
1. Sharon Grzanka reported that the Harford Transit Link Night at the Western Ho-Down Dance on April 15, 2011 at the McFaul Center was very successful. Attendees had the opportunity to meet Jim Ports, Harford Transit Administrator, Cheryl Gable, and a bus driver. A number

of applications for the New Freedom Extender Service are anticipated.

2. A “Train the Trainer” session will be held on Friday, April 29, 2011, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at the historic “Bel Air Colored High School”.
3. The next meeting of the Transportation Committee will be held on Friday, May 13, 2011, at 1:00 p.m. at the historic “Bel Air Colored High School”.

V. Disabilities Coordinator Report: No new information.

VI. Old Business:

- A. Fair Housing Month training. See IV. B. above.
- B. 2011 Art without Boundaries Exhibit, Student Gallery, Joppa Hall, Harford Community College. Commission members voted to cancel the Monday, July 25, 2011 meeting in order to attend the reception on July 26, 2011, the 21st Anniversary of the Signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. More information to follow. Artists with and without disabilities who would like to exhibit are asked to contact Natalie Weeks, Harford County Cultural Arts Board at 410-638-3527.
- C. FY2012 Annual Action Plan for Community Development Public Comment at the August 2011 meeting has been cancelled due to delays in the final Department of Housing and Urban Development budget.

VII. New Business:

- A. Legislative Review, Monday, May 2, 2011, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the McFaul Activity Center. Members of the Commission on Disabilities, Women’s Commission, Human Relations Commission, Advisory Commission on Aging, and the Youth Commission are invited to meet with members of the Harford Delegation regarding the just completed 2011 session of the Maryland General Assembly.
- B. Autism and Related Disorders Expo, Saturday, April 30, 2011, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at the Aberdeen Area Recreation Center, Aberdeen Proving Ground. Sharon is seeking a Commissioner to assist at the Commission’s information table.

VIII. Public Comment and Announcements:

- A. Reverend Ellison noted that the Commission Annual Picnic was to have been added to the agenda for discussion.

- B. Holly Mooney announced that the Image Center had hosted the first Independent Living (IL) Intent session for youth with disabilities on April 7th at the Silver Spring Mining Company in Bel Air. The next IL Intent will be held on Thursday, May 5th at Humanim in Baltimore.
 - C. Bob Coen stated that he spoke with Frank Marsden at Eden Mill about their plans to provide recreational opportunities for veterans from Perry Point. Eden Mill requires a signed release for all participants. Frank was informed that the VA would not allow veterans to sign a release. Reverend Ellison will contact Frank for more information.
 - D. Tracy Moore announced that she will graduate from Harford Community College on May 19th. Way to go, Tracy!!
- IX. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

2011 Legislative Review
As of 22 April 11¹

HB 58/ SB 202: Community Services Reimbursement Rate Commission-extension of termination date. Proposes to extend the date of termination from 30 September 2011 to 30 September 2016. Signed into law.

HB 104: Higher Education-Community Colleges; Tuition Waiver for Disabled Individuals. Amends the current law to allow residents, who left the workforce due to a total and permanent disability, to an exemption from tuition if they are taking 6-12 credits a semester. The individuals must be enrolled in a degree or certificate program designed to lead them to employment. The proposal was approved in the House and Senate.

HB 437: Real Property- Sales of New Homes and Minimum Visitability Features. This proposal requires developers of new home subdivisions, with 11 homes or more, and 3 or more model homes, to make one of those model homes available with minimum visitability features as dictated by the proposal. The proposal was passed in the House and Senate.

HB 452/ SB 702: Health Insurance - Coverage of Hearing Aids. Requires an insurer, nonprofit health service plan, or health maintenance organization that provides coverage for hearing aids to an insured or enrolled individual who is not a minor child and that places a dollar limit on the hearing aid benefit, to allow the individual to choose a hearing aid that is priced higher than the benefit payable under the policy or contract and pay the difference between the price of the hearing aid and the dollar limit on the benefit; etc. Both proposals passed in the House and Senate.

HB 621: Fire Safety- High Rise Buildings- Mobility Impaired Individuals. This proposal (failed last year) requires a high-rise owner to provide reasonable written notice to mobility-impaired individuals regarding their right to request a unit on the first five floors if one becomes available. The proposal was approved in the House and Senate.

HB 840: Children, Youth and Families- Services to Children with Special Needs. This proposal changes the state policy to add more emphasis on locally managed care through core service agencies. The proposal modifies the existing policy to provide access to necessary services that are the least restrictive and appropriate, in the most effective environment

¹ Note that proposals showing no activity since the first week of April 2011 have been removed from this report.

possible. Appears to be an interagency approach to family-driven, home and community based continuum of care. Passed in the House and Senate.

HB 849: Public Safety Smoke Detectors and Smoke Alarms. This proposal dictates that people can only sell or install alarms or detectors for individuals with hearing impairments in accordance with the State Fire Prevention Code. Signed into law.

SB 12/ HB 1223: Maryland Quiet Vehicles and Pedestrian Safety Task Force- Reconstitution. Re-establishes the task force, prohibits members from receiving compensation (but not reimbursement), and requires the task force to make findings and recommendations regarding the minimum sound levels and sound characteristics to be required for all new vehicles sold and registered in the state. This proposal might meet resistance from vehicle manufacturers and dealers who may be unable to comply with the recommendations or might not want to fund further add-ons to their vehicles. Both proposals have passed in the House and Senate.

SB 167/ HB 470: Public Institutions of Higher Education - Tuition Rates – Exemptions. Extends the period within which an honorably discharged veteran must present evidence to qualify for a resident tuition rate; establishing that specified individuals, including undocumented immigrants, shall be exempt from paying the out-of-state tuition rate at public institutions of higher education under specified circumstances; requiring specified individuals to provide documentation regarding Maryland income tax withholding; etc. Passed in the House and Senate.

SB 188: Recreational Fishing Licenses-Exemption for Disabled Armed Forces Members. Service members, with service-connected disabilities, may fish in Maryland without obtaining a license or applicable stamp. The only requirement is that service members possess a valid military ID. Passed in the House and Senate.

SB 489/ HB 38: Nonpublic Schools That Participate in State Programs - Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation – Policies. Requires nonpublic schools that accept State funds to adopt by March 31, 2012, a policy prohibiting bullying, harassment, and intimidation; requires the policy to include specified provisions; encourages nonpublic schools to develop the policy in consultation with specified groups; encourages nonpublic schools to publicize the policy in a specified manner; provides specified employees who report acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation are not civilly liable

under specified circumstances; etc. Both proposals passed in the House and Senate.

SB 682/ HB 793: Behavioral Health - Veterans - Coordination and Provision of Services. Reenacts specified provisions of law that were abrogated as of May 31, 2011, to provide for the continuance of the coordination of specified behavioral health services for specified veterans; requires the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, in consultation with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, the Maryland National Guard, and the Maryland Defense Force, to provide behavioral health services coordination for specified veterans, subject to specified limitations; etc. Signed into law.

SB 763: Hunting Licenses: Exemption for Disabled Armed Forces Members. This proposal expands the existing exemptions for hunting without a license, on private property, to service members with disabilities, as long as those individuals are carrying valid military identification. The proposal passed in the House and Senate.

SB 830: Extending the Date for Tax Credits for Employment of Qualifying Individuals with Disabilities. This proposal extends the date for taking qualifying tax credits for an additional year (2012 or 2015), depending on the state law. The proposal passed in the House and Senate.

SB 994: Sales and Use Tax - Alcoholic Beverages. Increases the rate of the sales and use tax imposed on the sale of an alcoholic beverage from 6% to 7% for fiscal year 2012, to 8% for fiscal year 2013, and to 9% for each fiscal year thereafter; requiring the Comptroller to distribute the revenue from the rate increase to the General Fund of the State; etc. A hearing was held on 23 March. Note that the status of this bill is getting a lot of publicity from special interest groups and the media, but it is not identical to the Lorraine Sheehan Health and Community Services Act of 2011. Passed in the House and Senate.

This document is available in alternative format:
410-638-3373 voice/TTY or disability@harfordcountymd.gov.